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ABSTRACT

The questionnaire used in a study of high school radio stations is presented in its entirety, with responses indicated in percentages. Questions cover station personnel, locations, facilities, administrative practices, broadcast scheduling, and programing. A summary page of miscellaneous information is included. (KP)

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A Study

of

Low-Power School Radio Stations

In The United States

1975

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In the winter of 1975, the author was on a sabbatical leave of absence, visiting high school radio stations throughout the United States. He found seventy-five out of the hundred stations, missing some because of vacations, some because of snow, and some because of their remote locations. The 17,250 mile trip was accomplished with a travel trailer and the help of an understanding wife.

Those stations which were missed were contacted and received a copy of the questionnaire, a list of school stations throughout the country, a study guide for the Third Class License test, and some promotional material from Central Michigan University.

Forty-six questionnaires were returned and have been analyzed. The following is a result of that analysis.

	Percent
1. Amount of time used in the planning of the station a. 1 year b. 2 years c. 3 years d. 4 years e. 5 years	a. 28 b. 35 c. 17 d. 9 e. 4
2. Time needed to construct station a. 1 years or over b. 10 months c. 8 months d. 6 months or less	a. 33 b. 11 c. 9 d. 43
3. Source of initial money a. General school funds b. Private grants c. State grants d. Federal grants	a. 70 b. 20 c. 9 d. 11
4. The station is under the jurisdiction of: a. Speech department b. English department c. Industrial Arts d. Science e. Other	a. 15 b. 17 c. 7 d. 2 e. 67
5. Hours per week of the air: a. 0-10 b. 11-20 c. 21-30 d. 31-40 e. over 40	a. 2 b. 0 c. 7 d. 26 e. 65
6. Cost per year of operation: (dollars) a. 0-500 b. 500-1000 c. 1000-2500 d. 2500-5000 e. over 5000	a. 17 b. 11 c. 28 d. 20 e. 20
7. How many of the following are official objectives of your station? a. instructional aid b. training c. public service d. extracurricular activity e. broadcast laboratory	a. 70 b. 93 c. 96 d. 67 e. 74
8. Do you have any released time for station advisory purposes? a. none b. 1 hour/day b. 2 hours/day c. 3 hours/day d. 4 hours/day e. full time	a. 41 b. 30 c. 9 d. 0 e. 17
9. Do you have a paid secretary? a. no b. 1/4 time c. 1/2 time d. 3/4 time e. full time	a. 87 b. 4 c. 7 d. 0 e. 2

10. Do you personally operate on the air?
a. no b. in emergencies only c. on special occasions
d. once a week e. every day

a. 26
b. 35
c. 32
d. 11
e. 7

11. Do you do remote broadcasts?
a. no b. sports c. concerts d. city and/or school meetings e. elections and other

a. 7
b. 89
c. 52
d. 46
e. 46

12. Do you produce and send out program schedules?
a. no b. once a year c. once per semester d. monthly e. weekly

a. 48
b. 11
c. 15
d. 7
e. 17

13. Do the faculty advisors receive an annual supplementary pay for their services?
a. none b. $100-300 c. $300-500 d. $500-1000 e. over $1000

a. 43
b. 4
c. 17
d. 24
e. 4

14. Do you have a printed program policy?
a. no b. a general policy c. specific policies
d. decide as we go e. planning one now

a. 15
b. 43
c. 35
d. 2
e. 2

15. Do you have a printed operations policy?
a. no b. a general policy c. a specific policy
d. oral instructions only e. we're planning one now

a. 7
b. 48
c. 28
d. 9
e. 4

16. Do you have "after hours" programing?
a. late afternoon b. evenings c. weekends d. holidays e. summers

a. 67
b. 80
c. 30
d. 26
e. 24

17. What recognition does your student staff receive for working at the station?
a. academic credit b. pay c. awards d. warm handshakes e. none

a. 76
b. 7
c. 37
d. 41
e. 9

18. Does your broadcast operation relate to your curricular program?
a. no b. class(es) in broadcasting c. occasional units in a course of English or Speech d. music e. science and/or industrial arts

a. 15
b. 74
c. 24
d. 11
e. 17

19. What kind of music do you play predominantly?
a. classical b. rock c. MOR d. folk-country-jazz e. mixed

a. 9
b. 46
c. 35
d. 15
e. 54

20. Do your DJ's comment on the music that is played?
a. no b. some c. most of the time d. all the time
e. not allowed

a. 7
b. 57
c. 20
d. 15

21. How do your operators study for their licenses?
a. we have classes in the subject b. study individually
c. informal meetings d. a course requirement

a. 57
b. 54
c. 39
d. 39

22. How far are you away from the nearest FCC Field Office?
a. 0-50 miles b. 50-100 miles c. 100-200 miles
d. 200-300 miles e. over 300 miles

a. 46
b. 15
c. 13
d. 9
e. 17

23. Do you produce programs especially for high school or elementary classes?
a. no b. occasionally c. once a month d. weekly

a. 39
b. 41
c. 2
d. 15

24. How many producing studios do you have?
a. one b. two c. three d. four e. five or more

a. 59
b. 35
c. 7
d. 0
e. 0

25. Do you have a functional student organization related to the station?
a. broadcasting club b. station staff functions as a club
c. ham club d. honorary society e. other

a. 28
b. 61
c. 4
d. 0
e. 4

26. Do students assume leadership positions in the operation?
a. no b. very few c. most positions d. all leadership positions

a. 0
b. 13
c. 35
d. 50

27. How is your student staff selected?
a. past experience b. first come, first chosen c. by audition and/or competitive procedures d. availability
e. friends on the staff

a. 43
b. 4
c. 65
d. 28
e. 4

28. Do you have students in the following positions:
a. station manager b. program director c. chief engineer
d. operations manager e. chief announcer

a. 57
b. 85
c. 42
d. 54
e. 35

29. Do you take audience surveys?
a. none b. rarely c. once a year d. once a semester
e. once a month

a. 26
b. 35
c. 26
d. 7
e. 7

30. Does any of the other faculty personnel participate in the station operation?
a. none b. on rare occasions c. quite often d. regularly

a. 39
b. 41
c. 11
d. 9

31. Do citizens in the community get involved in the station operation?
a. none b. rarely c. occasionally d. once a month e. regularly

a. 11
b. 24
c. 35
d. 0
e. 30

32. How do you evaluate the broadcast operation?
a. self-evaluation b. peer evaluation c. advisor evaluation d. administration e. listner evaluation

a. 65
b. 41
c. 63
d. 41
e. 61

33. Do you have a legal consultant?
a. no b. local c. Washington legal firm d. part-time basis e. full-time basis

a. 54
b. 30
c. 7
d. 13
e. 41

34. How have you organized your music library index system?
a. single category b. two catagories c. three categories d. four categories e. over four categories

a. 15
b. 22
c. 7
d. 13
e. 41

35. How do you train your student personnel?
a. students train each other b. advisor trains everybody c. in a class d. outside help e. all or most of the above

a. 50
b. 28
c. 35
d. 17
e. 37

36. What is your estimate of the extend of the community interest in your station?
a. very little b. fair c. quite a bit d. high

a. 11
b. 46
c. 22
d. 22

37. Which one(s) of the following are primary sources of worry to you in your station's operation?
a. budget b. student personnel c. amount of available time d. administration e. FCC

a. 76
b. 30
c. 43
d. 20
e. 17

38. What is the tested range of your signal?
a. don't know for sure b. 5 miles c. 6-8 miles d. 8-10 miles e. over 10 miles

a. 11
b. 17
c. 13
d. 24
e. 33

39. In what one(s) of the following do you feel you have had pretty good success? (check as many as you wish)
a. training of students b. building appreciation of radio c. technical training d. program production

a. 98
b. 54
c. 43
d. 54

40. Where do you feel you have had poor or no success?
a. programing b. operation c. performance d. training e. scheduling personnel

a. 17
b. 4
c. 17
d. 0
e. 15

41. Does supervising the broadcast operation use up:
a. very little time b. quite a lot of time c. full time
d. too much time e. an impossible amount of time

a. 17
b. 39
c. 24
d. 11
e. 9

42. Where do you get your material for news broadcast?
a. news teletype b. news staff c. news releases
d. newspapers and other radio stations e. no news programs

a. 35
b. 54
c. 54
d. 52
e. 13

43. How would you judge the relationship between the advisory staff and the student staff?
a. formal b. friendly c. democratic d. autocratic
e. chilly

a. 7
b. 87
c. 35
d. 4
e. 2

44. How do you promote your station?
a. on-the-air announcements b. school paper c. posted notices d. school PA e. in classes

a. 100
b. 70
c. 63
d. 48
e. 37

45. Do any of your advisory staff get to conferences?
a. NAEB b. BEA c. SCA d. State Speech Association
e. NAB

a. 7
b. 0
c. 0
d. 15
e. 9

46. Do you feel that you need any advice in regard to your operation?
a. no b. on occasion c. frequently d. every day e. help!

a. 11
b. 48
c. 26
d. 4
e. 9

47. How many other low-power school-station advisors are you acquainted with?
a. none b. 1-5 c. 6-10 d. 11-14 e. 15 or more

a. 22
b. 65
c. 9
d. 0
e. 4

48. How many other low-power school stations have you visited?
a. none b. 1-2 c. 3-4 d. over 4

a. 17
b. 28
c. 33
d. 22

49. How many school radio advisors do you correspond with?
a. none b. 1-2 c. 3-4 d. more than four

a. 52
b. 26
c. 11
e. 9

50. What do you judge to be your best source of help and advice?
a. NAEB b. local commercial station(s) c. nearby college or university stations d. individuals and businesses in the community e. other faculty members

a. 11
b. 61
c. 26
d. 35
e. 9

51. Do the prospects for your station appear: a. rosy b. stable c. shaky d. dismal e. impossible	a. 37 b. 54 c. 7 d. 2
52. Is your financial support: a. quite adequate b. barely adequate c. not enough d. uncertain e. fraction of need	a. 28 b. 28 c. 24 d. 11 e. 9
53. Does your station receive any regular recognition from the community? a. newspaper articles b. local broadcast stations c. official recognition by legally constituted bodies d. service clubs and other non-profit organizations	a. 78 b. 30 c. 22 d. 46 e. 2
54. Where do you feel you draw your strongest support? a. administration b. faculty colleagues c. students d. community citizens e. local businesses	a. 35 b. 13 c. 83 d. 41 e. 33
55. How do you feel school stations compare in operational practice to college and university ten-watters? a. about the same b. some fundamental differences c. school stations do a better job d. college stations do a better job e. they're completely unlike in their objectives and operation.	a. 20 b. 39 c. 4 d. 7 e. 17
56. Have you been able to carry on a systematic on-going evaluation of your operation? a. no b. a little informal evaluation c. a fair amount d. regularly	a. 4 b. 39 c. 35 d. 22
57. How many times have any of your advisory personnel been invited to participate in a conference program on the subject of low-power school radio? a. none b. 1-2 times c. 3-4 times d. over 4 times	a. 43 b. 43 c. 7 d. 7
58. Do you judge your administration to be interested in the school station? a. no b. a little bit c. quite interested d. highly interested	a. 2 b. 35 c. 22 d. 41
59. Have you had trouble getting your students licensed under the current rules? a. no problems b. some problems c. less than half are passing the test d. we're in trouble!	a. 9 b. 28 c. 43 d. 20
60. What kind of a job are your students doing in the station operation? a. shaky b. getting along c. doing a pretty good job d. super!	a. 0 b. 9 c. 63 d. 28

61. Are your station objectives reflected in your programing?
a. a little b. pretty well c. most of the time
d. all the way

a. 4
b. 26
c. 39
d. 30

62. As an advisor, do you supervise the station as a:
a. liberal b. radical c. democratic leader
d. dictator

a. 30
b. 0
c. 50
d. 13

63. Do you plan your program:
a. a year ahead b. a semester ahead c. a month ahead
d. a week ahead e. as you go along

a. 22
b. 28
c. 13
d. 26
e. 11

64. How are you set in terms of equipment?
a. right up to snuff b. could use a couple of new units
c. need a lot of new equipment d. we're twenty years behind!

a. 22
b. 28
c. 13
d. 2

65. Do you air programs which are produced outside your own studio?
a. network b. other stations c. universities and colleges d. remote broadcasts e. classrooms

a. 24
b. 26
c. 54
d. 67
e. 30

66. What percentage of your staff is female?
a. none b. 10-20% c. 20-30% d. 40-50% e. over 50%

a. 0
b. 59
c. 20
d. 15
e. 2

67. Who is your chief engineer?
a. yourself b. a student c. engineer for a local commercial station d. another faculty member d. local citizen

a. 13
b. 26
c. 33
d. 35

68. Who makes programing decisions?
a. yourself b. students c. administration d. program board e. faculty program director besides yourself

a. 78
b. 65
c. 9
d. 9
e. 2

69 How does your budget system operate?
a. set up yearly in advance b. set up each semester in advance c. money appropriated as needed d. mostly on an emergency basis

a. 67
b. 0
c. 15
d. 15

70. What seems to be the principal problem in the use of student personnel?
a. turnover b. not enough licenses c. lack of seriousness d. interested only in DJ work
e. scheduling

a. 13
b. 37
c. 24
d. 43
e. 28

71. What are the principal advantages of the use of student personnel?
a. always plenty of them available b. quick learning c. willing to put in time d. dependable e. resourceful

a. 39
b. 46
c. 80
d. 52
e. 43

72. Do you have theft problems?
a. none b. rarely c. occasionally d. quite a bit e. they steal us blind!

a. 28
b. 35
c. 28
d. 4
e. 4

73. Would you go into school broadcasting again?
a. you bet! b. I think I would c. it would depend on the pay and the work-load situation d. I'd think it over very carefully first e. forget it!

a. 43
b. 15
c. 30
d. 9
e. 0

74. Do you believe the school broadcast experience to be effective for students in terms of:
a. basic education b. work training c. personality building d. improving dependability e. setting goals

a. 72
b. 82
c. 80
d. 74

75. Do you think that there is a sufficient quantity of materials available from the FCC to study for a Third Class License?
a. plenty b. not too much c. need more d. where is it!

a. 7
b. 11
c. 43
d. 32

Miscellaneous information (as of winter, 1975)

(According to information available at the time the results of the study were analyzed, using the returned questionaires as a basis).

The oldest high school ten-watter appears to be WHHS, Havertown, Pennsylvania, 1949.
The next two oldest high school ten-watters appear to be in Michigan:

WHPR, Highland Park (1954)
WOAK, Royal Oak (1957)

Over half of the school stations are located in four midwestern states: Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana.

The station with the smallest number of personnel uses ten students: one station has 300 on the staff. The average is 43.

One station has 77 square feet of space; another has 4705 square feet. The average is 739.

Half of all school ten-watters have one faculty advisor.

Antenna lead lenghth ranges from 37 to 350 feet. Ten stations have antenna leads over 150 feet in length.

Forty-eight percent of the transmitting antennas are made by Gates.

Twenty percent of the antenna towers are home-made or improvised.

There are four stereo ten-watters in the country, as of 1975.

Forty-seven percent of the transmitters are made by Gates, who also made 33 percent of the consoles. Twenty-four percent of the consoles were made by Sparta.

There are four stations with 4-bay antennas.

One school ten-watter is the only station on the air in its community after sundown.

The northernmost school station is in Newport, Washington; the southernmost is Winterpark, Florida; the westernmost is Arcata, California; the easternmost is Brunswick, Maine.

Twenty-four states have no low power high school stations.

Sixty-five percent of the school stations are on the air at least forty hours per week.

There were about 100 high school ten-watters in the country in 1975.

It appears that there are about 135 to 140 school ten-watters now.